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# West Virginia NRCS News and Views

**USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service  
November 2005**



Click on photo to enlarge. (Photo Bob Shaw,  
Clarksburg Exponent)

Leonard Jackson, Management  
Services Program Assistant in  
Morgantown, places flowers at the  
Veterans Memorial on the Harrison  
County Courthouse Plaza on Veterans  
Day.

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The 2005 West Virginia Conservation Partnership Conference took place November 1-3 in Charleston, WV. The theme was Public Awareness of West Virginia Conservation Districts. [...More Info](#)

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To submit news items for the February *News and Views*, please send an e-mail

message to [Carol Lagodich](#)

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The Natural Resources Conservation Service provides leadership in a partnership effort to help people conserve, maintain and improve our natural resources and environment.

NRCS West Virginia State Office

75 High Street Room, 301, Morgantown, WV 26505

304-284-7540 | fax 304-284-4839

<http://www.wv.nrcs.usda.gov/>

Ronald L Hilliard, West Virginia State Conservationist

NRCS field offices are located throughout West Virginia

Visit <http://www.wv.nrcs.usda.gov/contact/> for addresses and phone numbers.

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## Message from Ron Hilliard

As I have just returned from the West Virginia Conservation Agency Partnership Meeting in Charleston, WV, I commend the partners for their willingness to work together to get more done. The highlight of the meeting was the recognition of the Conservation Farmer of the Year.



This year the award went to Hubert and May Nestor from Barbour County. Hubert and May, began their farming career in 1952 and now contract graze cattle on their 170 acres. Congratulations.

All of the area conservation farm winners are to be congratulated for their excellent work that is being done on their individual places. The farms that were judged this year were:



Triple J Farms, Ted Jenkins and Family of Preston County



Triple C Farm, Jimmie and Donna Coffman of Greenbriar County



Warren and Miranda Spry of Wayne County



Grady's Farm, Judith and Denzil Grady of Putnam County



Ridge View Farm, Jim and Suzanne Dietz of Wood County

This year will be the second year for the Conservation Security Program (CSP) in West Virginia.



The watersheds selected for 2006 are, Little Kanawha River (Little Kanawha, West Fork, Tygarts Valley and Elk Conservation Districts), Lower Kanawha River (Western, Little Kanawha, Capitol and Guyan Conservation Districts) and the West Fork River ( West Fork and Tygarts Valley Conservation Districts).

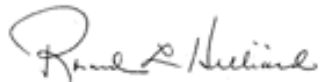
During this next year, I want to encourage all offices to expand the Earth Team Volunteer Program. The valuable assistance provided by volunteers allows all offices to reach more farmers and landowners in West Virginia. We have a large and important workload. While our high quality employees are the key to accomplishing our mission, Earth Team Volunteers may be an underused resource. My wife, Edith, has been an Earth Team Volunteer for many years. It is usually one of the first things that she does when we move to a new area. In Guam, Edith reorganized and updated the filing system and in West Virginia she helped with a principal staff retreat. Edith believes that she gets as much out of the arrangement as NRCS does. I'm told that this is true of most volunteers. I encourage you to recruit and train quality volunteers. It is a winning situation for everyone.

The following quote by Chuck Swindoll is worth repeating and remembering as we enter the new year:

The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude, to me, is more important than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than success, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness, or skill. It will make or break a company... a church... a home. The remarkable thing is we have a choice everyday regarding the attitude we embrace for that day. We cannot change our past... we cannot change the fact that people act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing

we can do is play on the one string, we have, and that is our attitude... I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it. And so it is with you... we are in charge of our ATTITUDES.

A special thanks goes out to the NRCS field staffs for their dedication and diligence to getting the job done this past year. I look forward to an exciting and challenging year in 2006.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Ron Hilliard". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ron" being more prominent than the last name "Hilliard".

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## 2005 West Virginia Partnership Conference



The 2005 West Virginia Conservation Partnership Conference took place November 1-3, 2005 in Charleston, WV. The theme was Public Awareness of West Virginia Conservation Districts.



NRCS was involved with displays for the West Virginia Association of Professional Soil Scientist, The West Virginia Grassland Evaluation Contest, and Conservation Security Program (CSP).



Krysta Harden, Executive Director, National Association of Conservation Districts was the keynote speaker. She applauded WV's 100% participation. Krysta said it is up to us to take credit for our accomplishments by writing articles for local paper, talking to civic groups and local organizations and closed with "Live life having more dreams than memories".



Gregory Stone, Assistant State Conservationist – Field Operations continued the tradition of remembering the good work and friendship and passion for conservation of some who passed away in the past year in a memorial service.



Roseanne Kennedy, Charlotte Wertz, and Ron Hilliard (left to right) are waiting to hear Dan Sebert, Executive Director, National Watershed Coalition speak. The coalition is a collection of organizations with members being the most important asset. He discussed the challenge of many WV dams reaching the end of their design life. WV has been successful with getting more earmarked than appropriated funds.

Ron Hilliard, WV State Conservationist (left), introduced Dick Coombe, Regional Assistant Chief (right). Dick introduced *Helping People Help the Land* as the new NRCS mission statement. Other messages were:



- Technical Assistance is our foundation
- Its critical to keep conservation on the ground
- Partnership is well in WV
- 50% of NRCS employees are eligible for retirement in 5 years.



Kurt Simon, Little Kanawha RC&D coordinator (left) , talked about moving RC&D offices forward to become independent--earning mission based income to become self sustaining. Some ideas are fee for service —providing a service there is a need for that doesn't exist in the community. Some examples are work shop fees, selling publications, endowment funds, or owning property to produce income.



Herb Andrick, Assistant State Conservationist-Programs was part of the Conservation Panel discussion. He used a Power Point slide show to explained the CSP program.

## Awards



One outstanding volunteer from West Virginia is honored with the Individual Earth Team Volunteer Award each year. This is the second time Kelly Alvis received this honor. Kelly is well-known for his dedication to conservation and has been a valued team member of the Princeton Service Center Staff for more than five years.



Kelly couldn't make the Awards Luncheon, so Bill Harris, District Conservationist at the Princeton Service Center accepted the Earth Team Volunteer Award for him.



Gary Redden (back), Soil Conservationist/Grassland Specialist, pictured with the Cabell Midland High School Grassland Evaluation Contest winners.



Wendy Noll, GIS Specialist MLRA Soil Survey Region 13 Office (center) recieved the Golden Auger Award from Steve Carpenter (left) and John Sencindiver. (right)



NRCS Retiree Kelley Sponaugle (left rear) coached the winning Shady Spring High School Biology Club.



Barbara McWhorter, WV State Forester, received an Outstanding service Award from the West Virginia Soil and water Conservation Society. Barbara also coordinated the annual scholarship silent auction.



Pamela Yost explained the achievements of the 2005 WV Watershed Awards nominees.



Wendy Noll accepts a Merit Award on behalf of The West Virginia Association of Professional Soil Scientists from the West Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Society.

Read more about the Conservation Farm Winners at: [http://www.wvca.us/news/news\\_story.cfm?id=378](http://www.wvca.us/news/news_story.cfm?id=378)

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## From the Field

### Mountain Resource Conservation and Development Council

Working with Greenbrier County officials the Mountain RC&D Council assisted with the installation of a new lighting system for the Rupert Athletic Field. The estimated cost of the project was over \$58,000. This project was completed due to the dedication and hard work of community leaders. Project sponsors included Greenbrier County Commission, community businesses, local individuals, and the Mountain RC&D Council.

Mountain RC&D played a critical roll for the Muddy Creek Community building in a drama that included Greenbrier County Commission and Governor Joe Manchin. In a spur of the moment pitch by the County Commission for state funding assistance to Governor Manchin, Mountain RC&D provided matching monies that saw a new roof for the community center.

This year Mountain RC&D began a new partnership with the Operation Sharing Program. The Council has undertaken this project to foster community development and assist local organizations to help themselves. Area communities were the recipients of 36,000 pounds of food and body products and nearly 10,000 books which were distributed to county libraries.

For more information contact Mike Gasper at the [Mountain RC&D Office](#).

### Potomac Headwaters RC&D VISTA Volunteers

The Potomac Headwaters RC&D has used volunteers for many years. Volunteers have worked on more projects than can be recalled. But, the RC&D Council has one special group of volunteers that are especially effective. These are VISTAs. VISTA stands for Volunteers In Service To America. Currently two VISTA members work through the

RC&D.



Bonnie Shawyer has been assigned to the PH RC&D since June 2004. During her first year, Bonnie worked primarily on the overall plan of remediation acid mine drainage in the North Branch of the Potomac counties of Grant and Mineral.

She made a prioritized inventory of AMD sites, there were over 50 sites. Now the work has shifted to developing a plan to remediate one or two of these sites and create a model procedure for working on the others. The goal of all this activity is to help improve the water quality in the North Branch and the individual streams that are affected by AMD. Bonnie's other major activity has been to organize two Karst conferences. The first was held in November 2004, the second was just held in early October. Over 100 people were in attendance. They received several very technical presentations about karst and how to develop land on karst geology. Plans are underway for the 2006 Karst Conference that will focus on water quantity in karst. Bonnie is also charged with helping to administer the Dry Hydrant Cost-Share Program, providing assistance for implementation of local projects for the Potomac River Tributary Strategy Plan. She will also be working with new watersheds that need assistance from the RC&D Project Office.



Marcie Beyersdorfer is the other VISTA working the PH RC&D. Marcie has been working since August of this year. Her responsibility is to provide assistance for creating new and improving old trails and parks.

This is not a new position. Prior to Marcie's arrival, three others served as the Trails and Parks Coordinator. The first was Justin Thaine, who served from September 2002 to March 2003. Following Justin was Craig Colistra. Craig worked from June 2003 to June 2004. On the heels of Craig was Dustin Hancock. Many of the NRCS personnel knew Dustin. He worked on trails and parks from October 2004 to February 2005. Much work and assistance has been provided to cities, counties, and even independent

groups during this period.

If you want more information about VISTA, visit their web site <http://www.americorps.gov/about/programs/vista.asp> or contact Roger Boyer at the [Potomac Headwaters RC&D Office](#).

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## Best Places to Work in the Federal Government 2005

The Partnership for Public Service, in conjunction with American University's Institute for the Study of Public Policy Implementation, and the School of Public Affairs, has analyzed data from 150,000 federal employees surveyed this year by the Office of Personnel Management.

Among 250 government organizations, NRCS comes in number 28—in the top 15 percent. The National Agricultural Statistics Service at number 26 just barely beat NRCS out as the top USDA agency. NRCS scored 71.5—higher than the private sector average rating of 64.7—as a good place to work. And USDA ranked in the top 10 among the major organizations for being family-friendly, supporting diversity, and providing training and development for its employees.

See the complete listing at:

PDF: [http://www.bestplacestowork.org/pdfs/Subcomponent\\_Rankings.pdf](http://www.bestplacestowork.org/pdfs/Subcomponent_Rankings.pdf)

Flash: <http://www.bestplacestowork.org/>

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# What is Boot Camp?

Submitted by Claire Carpenter

The Boot Camp concept originates in the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) of the 1930's where NRCS conservationists—then called the Soil Conservation Service or SCS—supervised conservation work at 800 camps nationwide. The CCC was abolished in 1942, but the boot camp concept lived on at four SCS regional training centers located in Pennsylvania, Nebraska, Texas, and Oregon. In the mid 1960's, these regional training centers became technical training centers and the field training was abandoned. NRCS hung onto the boot camp idea with various States establishing their own training based on the old SCS regional training center concept.

Emerging needs called for a national, uniform, approach to the boot camp concept. Conservation boot camps provide a unified, nationally-driven training forum to give new employees training in planning, designing, and implementing conservation practices and in agency operations. Since a large number of NRCS employees will be eligible to retire in the next five years, Boot Camp training prepares replacement employees for their NRCS careers.

The Boot Camp in Shepherdstown is one of several courses in basic training for new employees with two years or less experience with NRCS. Thirty-one people from all over the country attended this year. The ages of the participants ranged from twenty-two to the fifties. Six or seven West Virginia employees will be attending next year.

The training camp lasted for six weeks, divided into two, three-week sessions. Trainees develop a plan to improve farm operations on a local farm and present the plan to the landowner. A sample of instruction during the first two week session includes: , participants receiving hands-on field training, lectures on NRCS mission and goals, lectures on Civil Rights (Title 6 & 7), an introduction to Conservation Planning (which



included the Nine Step Process), Conservation Planning Certification, NPPH Overview/ Discussion, and Community Involvement Watershed Planning. Also included in the training is an introduction to map reading and GIS, introduction to soil surveys, and hands on field experience. The purpose of this training workshop is to bring the new employees up to speed on what NRCS is all about, covering the basic programs that the agency provides, and teach the skills needed to implement the program to NRCS customers.

The instructors are knowledgeable and experienced experts from NRCS ranging from soil conservationists to assistant state conservationists. This year's Boot Camp instructors from West Virginia include Jared Beard, Rebecca MacLeod, Barbara McWorter, Casey Shrader, Jason Teets, and John Weller.

#### Jared Beard

- Was the leader of the Soils Team
- Led exercises on Soil Forming Factors
- Led exercises on Soil Taxonomy
- Led exercises on Soil Properties
- Led exercises on Sources of Soil Survey Information
- Led exercises on SSURGO Access Soil Survey Database
- Led exercises on Geology and Conservation Operations
- Led a field exercise on Wetland Determination

#### Rebecca MacLeod

- Taught Conservation Planning Certification as a member of the planning team
- Taught classes on Landowner goals and objectives
- Taught classes on Conservation Planning
- Taught classes on Progress Report and Shipping Instructions

#### Barbara McWhorter

- Was a member of the Forestry Team
- Assisted in teaching a class on forestry and woodlands

#### Casey Shrader

- Was a member of the Fish, Wildlife and Wetlands Team and
- Assisted in instructing exercises on Stream Visual Assessment Protocol and Habitat Assessment Guides

#### Jason Teets

- Was a member of the Soils team
- Assisted Jared with teaching these classes

#### John Weller

- Was a member of the Engineering Team and
- Helped teach a class on Engineering in NRCS
- Helped teach a class on Unified Soil Classification Systems
- Helped teach a class on Irrigation
- Helped teach a class on Engineering Survey Field Experience
- Helped teach a class on Hydrology
- Helped teach a class on Hydraulics
- Assisted with a field exercise on Design of Engineering Conservation Practices
- Assisted with a field exercise on Hydraulics, Hydrology, and Design
- Helped teach a class on Design of Engineering Conservation practices
- Assisted with a field exercise on Construction and Safety

Howard Butts, Ray Hamilton, and Bob Schnably have been added to next year's Boot Camp instructors cadre.

Wes Morrow, Roger Boyer, and Sheldon Findley served as moderators for the training. The moderators provided assistance to the Site Coordinator, Logistics Coordinator, and

the course instructors. Other duties include:

- Ensure all instructors for that day have arrived and address any needs
- Introductions
- Keep instructors and participants on schedule (return from breaks on time)
- Announcements
- Coordinate with logistics for field trips/equipment/transportation
- Make sure presentation equipment is available and functional

For More information on NRCS Boot Camp, visit the webpage located on our National Site at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/news/thisweek/2005/092805/bootcamperspect.html>

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## Soils Update

### SAMB imagery Available on Line

The West Virginia GIS Technical Center has posted quarter quad tiles of the SAMB imagery, for all WV counties. The tiles are in UTM Zone 17 or 18, NAD83. (The SAMB imagery is digital natural color orthophotography created by the WV Statewide Addressing and Mapping Board to improve the quality of 9-11 emergency response in WV. The photography was flown in the spring of 2003.)

To download for use in ArcMap, go to the WV GIS Technical Center SAMB Orthophotos web site at <http://wvgis.wvu.edu/data/dataset.php?action=search&ID=254> and scroll down to "WVGISTC (USGS Quarter Quad Tiles - UTM Zone 17 North)" or "WVGISTC (USGS Quarter Quad Tiles - Eastern Panhandle - UTM Zone 18 North)." Be sure to copy both the .sdw and .sid files for the file you want to download.

Kurt Donaldson, of the WVGISTC, said that there are some problem quarter quads where the North and South State Plane Coordinate System zones merge, in that those quads contain black pixels. USGS is working on fixing this problem, and corrected quarter quads will be posted when available.

For more information contact Debbie Chase, GIS Specialist (Publications) at (304) 284-7568.

### Soils Workshop

The National Academy of Sciences will be holding a workshop titled "Frontiers in Soil Science Research" from December 12-14, 2005 at the National Academies building in Washington, DC. The workshop will convene experts in soil science and associated disciplines to identify emerging research and to address the integration of the biological, physical, geological, and chemical sciences within soil science. Speakers and

participants will identify research priorities and potential breakthroughs within soil science, including interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary research and technological and computational needs to advance soil science.

On the evening of December 12, 2005 the workshop will open with a keynote presentation by Brent Clothier of the Horticulture and Food Research Institute of New Zealand. The Workshop will continue on December 13-14, 2005 with topic sessions headed by lead speakers, followed by comments from pre-selected discussants and then a general discussion among participants. Additional information about the workshop, including the agenda, list of speakers and registration will soon be on the workshop website at <http://soilsassociation.org/>.

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### 2005 North East Forest Soils Conference a Success

Submitted by Rob Pate

The 2005 North East Forest Soils Conference was held in Southern West Virginia July 18th through July 21st. This was a very successful cooperative effort between the US Forest Service, NRCS, West Virginia Division of Forestry, and the coal industry. Participants had the unique opportunity to visit active and reclaimed mountaintop removal mines on private company land, as well as look at natural soils, and learn about the local history of the area.



Aron Sattler, Steve Carpenter, WV-NRCS State Soil Scientist, and Charles Delp, Asst. State Soil Scientist prepare to hit the field.

Reclaimed areas were visited at the Dal-Tex mine in Logan County, and the Hobet 21 mine in Boone County. Dal-Tex is not active at this time, and has about 10,000 acres of reclaimed mine land.



Dal-Tex mine in Logan County, WV

The Hobet 21 mine in Boone County is active and produces about 4 million tons of clean coal a year. Hard hats, steel toed boots, and safety glasses are required. Driving on the left is nerve racking for visitors on this 20,000 acre mine site. Employees and visitors drive on the left, so the coal trucks can stay safely on the inside of the hill.



30-Year Reclaimed Strip Mine at Hobet 21, in Boone County, with good growth of Red Maple, Black Locust, Yellow Poplar, and Black Cherry.

An active day was spent at the Stollings Mine on Rum Creek, also in Logan County. The low sulfur, low ash Fiveblock seam here is 12 feet thick. Stollings is one of the few smaller, family owned mines left, and produces less than 1,000,000 tons of clean coal a year. Itmann, Laidig, and Guyandotte soils were looked at, along with forest fire damage and a burning underground coal seam. Native Americans traveled this Blair Mountain Ridge, and many artifacts were found by miners.



Aron Sattler cools off in front of a deep mine opening in the Fiveblock coal seam.



Huge "Mine Breaks" opened up, where the burning underground Fiveblock coal seam cracked the heavy sandstone above.



A banner year for Timber Rattlesnakes made you watch every step.



Forest Fires are hard to control in an area with very little road access.



Aron Sattler, Eileen O'Neill, and Rob Pate helped excavate and describe a soil.



The monolith team consisting of Steve Carpenter, Charlie Delp, Wendy Noll, Katy McBride, Aron Sattler, Eileen O'Neill, Mike Jones, and Skip Bell, helped prepare the Guyandotte site for a monolith extraction.



Devil Anse Hatfield's gravesite was visited by the group.

The last day was spent at the Samples Mine in Kanawha County. The Samples mine is the largest surface mine east of the Mississippi River. It produces 6,000,000 clean tons of coal a year. It is a non-union mine, and has 12,000 acres under permit with about 6,000 acres reclaimed. It has an active drag line with a 115 cubic yard bucket.



Mike Jones shows the scale of the 115 cubic yard dragline at the Samples Mine.

Thank you's go out to Larry Emerson of Arch Coal, Rob Pate of NRCS, and Mary Beth Adams of the US Forest Service for helping to set up this conference.

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# Reporting stream bank erosion and channel obstructions

There are new telephone numbers for reporting stream impairments and directing citizens to request assistance to address stream bank erosion and channel obstructions.

Initial site assessments will be made by West Virginia Conservation Agency (WVCA) personnel. Sites that are potentially eligible for Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) program assistance will be referred to NRCS by WVCA. Those sites will be evaluated for eligibility through the EWP process by the appropriate Damage Survey Report (DSR) Team.



Click on map to  
enlarge.

The WVCA has reorganized its field office structure in order to improve its efficiency and response time in evaluating requests for assistance to watershed impairments resulting from flooding and other natural disasters in West Virginia. This reorganization has resulted in the establishment of Watershed Field Offices for the northern and southern regions of the state. The map to the left shows the regional boundaries.

Requests for assistance from counties in the northern region are to be directed to the Watershed Field Office in Morgantown by calling (304) 285-3118 (FAX 304-285-3128). Requests for assistance from counties in the southern region should be directed to the Watershed Field Office in Oak Hill by calling (304) 469-6415 (FAX 304-469-4395). The Guthrie Center (304-558-2204) remains the central office for WVCA, however, that number should only be used as a last resort.

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## West Virginia NRCS Employees Help with Hurricane Recovery

Three West Virginia NRCS employees were dispatched to Louisiana to help with hurricane recovery. Carol Lagodich, Public Affairs and Marketing Specialist, did a 14-day assignment in October. She worked as the Information Officer assigned to the Whalen Great Basin Incident Management Team at the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Barksdale Mobilization Center (MOB) at Barksdale Air Force Base. Laura Davis, Soil Conservation Technician, at the Beckley Service Center, is currently working in Jefferson Parish with the Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). She expects to do a 60-day assignment. Rebecca Flanagan, Soil Conservationist, at the McMechen Service Center, left for Louisiana on November 16. She is also working with USACE. Their experience may appear in the next News and Views.

Carol worked in the northwest part of the state (away from the devastated areas) at a receiving and distribution center. Carol has worked with incident management teams in the past on forest fires. Incident assignments often mean sleeping on the ground so she packed a tent and sleeping bag, but stayed in a motel since the MOB was in a city. Job duties included: a communications plan, presentations at the morning and evening briefing, letters and certificates of recognition, researching and answering questions about FEMA programs, posting information for truck drivers, and writing "hometown" news stories featuring crews working at the MOB.

The Barksdale MOB shipped disaster relief supplies to hurricane affected areas of Louisiana. Over 18 million liters of water and almost 38 million pounds of ice were dispatched. Other commodities shipped included MRE's (meals ready to eat), cots, medical supplies, plastic sheeting, generators, home repair kits, wash kits, tables and chairs.

The MOB began operations for Katrina relief response on Aug. 28, 2005 and continued

to support Hurricane Rita. Up to 320 trucks went through the center in one day. Contract and independent truck drivers from across the country brought commodities to the MOB. Items were shipped out to Red Cross, Salvation Army Kitchens, Disaster Medical Teams, and Response Support Facilities.



Trucks were parked on the air force base run ways.



FEMA trailers were used to stage supplies



Supplies were unloaded from one truck and loaded onto another.



A hospitality tent provided snacks and coffee for the waiting truckers.

Activity at the MOB was winding down as Carol left. Disaster relief supplies were being transferred to Camp Beauregard Federal Operational Staging Area (FOSA) in Pineville, Louisiana. "There was still a need for ice and water," said Chuck Tarr, FEMA Barksdale MOB Center Manager, but Beauregard is closer to the sites needing supplies." The uncertainty of Hurricane Wilma's path slowed the transition.

The center was staffed by an interagency team. Federal agencies besides FEMA and NRCS, included the Forest Service (FS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), National Park Service (NPS), Department of Transportation (DOT), and Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). The team also included Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC) employees and volunteer fire fighters from around the country.

FEMA is part of the Department of Homeland Security and is tasked with responding to, planning for, recovering from, and mitigating against disasters. If you are interested in assisting with future natural disasters, see [the attached PDF](#) file for a letter sent to all employees about required Homeland Security and FEMA training training offered through AgLearn.

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## Conservation Education



### Doing an Education Program?

Try these links:

- NRCS Information For Teachers and Students at <http://soils.usda.gov/teachers.html>
- NRCS Soil Information at <http://soils.usda.gov/education/>
- Agricultural Ideas for Science Fair Projects at <http://www.ars.usda.gov/is/kids/fair/ideasframe.htm>
- Soil Science education page at <http://soil.gsfc.nasa.gov/>
- Henry Ferguson has compiled information at <http://www.ngdc.wvu.edu/~hferguson/educationNGDC/>

Go to the Landcare publications website: <http://landcare.nrcs.usda.gov> and type the word *education* into the browser window. You'll receive a listing of products currently identified as educational materials. Landcare offers an Educational Packet that contains fact sheets, posters, the Soils CD, etc. to assist with conservation education. The material covers a wide range of experiments suitable for ages K-12. This packet contains fact sheets, posters, the Soils CD, etc. to assist with consevation education. The material covers a wide range of experiments suitable for ages K-12. (One packet per caller).

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### Water Testing Kits Available

AMERICA'S  
CLEAN WATER  
FOUNDATION



LaMotte Water testing kits are available for volunteer and conservation education use.

These simple kits include multiple water quality tests that are great for school activities, scouting activities, workshops, or volunteer use. With these kits, you can:

- Test how many water molecules are in the water, assessing the diversity of the species within the water and the health of the ecosystem.
- Measure the pH, assessing whether or not the water body favorably supports life.
- Measure the water's clarity and presence of debris, sand, silt and other sediments.
- Measure the water's temperature.

If you are interested in obtaining water testing kits, please contact:

Carol Lagodich

WV NRCS State Office

75 High Street, Room 301

Morgantown, WV 26505

(304) 284-4826

[Carol.Lagodich@wv.usda.gov](mailto:Carol.Lagodich@wv.usda.gov)

Claire Carpenter

WV NRCS State Office

75 High Street Room, 301

Morgantown, WV 26505

(304) 284-7575

[Claire.Carpenter@wv.usda.gov](mailto:Claire.Carpenter@wv.usda.gov)

## PLT Teachers Workshops

About 40 pre-service West Liberty teachers attended a Project Learning Tree® (PLT) workshop to learn how to think, not what to think, about the environment. The August 25 workshop was hosted by the Oglebay Good Zoo and organized by Linda Carnell (WVDOF). Jason Jones (WVDOF) and Carol Lagodich (NRCS) assisted with Thursday's workshop. A second team of facilitators conducted the workshop on August 26 for another group of student teachers.

PLT is a multi-disciplinary environmental education program for educators and students. The workshop stressed Pre K to grade 8 but activities may be adjusted for higher grades. PLT participants learn how to investigate environmental issues and encourages them to make informed responsible decisions. Topics range from forests, wildlife, and water, to community planning, waste management and energy.



In *Every Tree for Itself*, students compete for needs like water, sunlight, and nutrients.



Students record observations in a journal.



Forest fire behavior is demonstrated by creating a matchstick forest.

PLT meets state and national education standards. The curriculum materials provide the tools educators need to bring the environment into the classroom and their students into the environment. Each student received a NRCS Backyard Conservation Guide and Earth Team brochure.

Barbara McWhorter, WV State Forester, is also active in PLT.

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# Earth Team Update

## Earth Team Coordinator Message

Submitted by Peg Reese

The time between Thanksgiving and New Years is a time of quiet celebration for me. I take time to think about the many blessings that have been given to me and think ahead to what I can do to improve next year. I'm hoping that you will join me in this activity and focus some of your attention on the Earth Team.

One of my blessings is Mary Ellen Brady, a volunteer that has been helping NRCS and me for many years. She is a dependable person who does more than pick up part of the workload; she provides insight to what people outside the agency think and enthusiasm for our mission when mine is lagging. Mary Ellen has become what the vision of the Earth Team espouses – a valued member of our team.

Kelly Alvis, West Virginia's 2005 Earth Team Volunteer, has attained the same status in the Princeton Service Center. Like Mary Ellen, he has been a volunteer for many years. His length of volunteer service means that Kelly probably produces more work with less NRCS supervision and training than a newer volunteer. Len Alvis has told me that he is extremely helpful in accomplishing their mission.



Looking at the statistics for the Earth Team in West Virginia suggests that many of you are missing out on the advantages of having one or more good volunteers helping you.

(click to enlarge)

Long-term volunteers can't be just pulled out of a closet when you need one. As with a

new employee you need to recruit one and groom them for higher responsibility. Why not make this one of your goals for 2006?

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### **NRCS and Earth Team Trivia**

1. In 1933 a temporary agency in the Department of the Interior was created to demonstrate practical conservation methods to farmers. What was the name of this temporary agency?
2. The Soil Conservation Service was established in 1935 in what Department?
3. Who was the first actor to serve as a spokesman for the Earth Team?
4. What state formed the first conservation district? What was the name of that district?
5. In what year did the Soil Conservation Service change its name to Natural Resources Conservation Service?
6. In 1962 a program was created to advance community development and environmental protection in multi-county areas. What was the name of this program?
7. What was the name of the first campaign developed to recruit volunteers?

### **Answers:**

1. Soil Erosion Service
  2. Interior
  3. Anthony Quinn
  4. North Carolina, Browns Creek SC District
  5. 1994
  6. Research Conservation and Development (RC&D)
  7. "We owe it to our children"
- 

### **Five Easy Questions to Answer Who is an Earth Team Volunteer**

1. Is he/she at least 14 years old?

2. If he/she is an NRCS, RC&D, or district employee or council member, is the job duties outside the scope of his/her paid or elected position?
3. Is the job he/she is performing one which an NRCS employee can perform?
4. Could he/she be reimbursed for incidental expenses incurred in performing the job?
5. Is your state conservationist willing to extend Worker's Compensation and Tort Claims coverage for him/her while performing the job?

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## Civil Rights

### Mentoring Program

Submitted by Rebecca MacLeod, Martinsburg Service Center District Conservationist

The WV NRCS Mentoring Program has recently been reactivated and is ready to accept applications for those willing to serve as mentors, as well as employees that would like to have a mentor assigned to them. Recently [WV Bulletin 360-6-2](#) announced the guidelines for this once popular program. Contained in the bulletin are the application forms for mentors and protégés.

Mentoring programs are common in the private sector and are seen as ways to attract and retain competent people. It is an efficient way to get new employees up to speed, and is an excellent forum for leadership development. All new NRCS employees in WV will be assigned a mentor for at least one year. However, any employee may request participation after filling out an application. Employees anticipating retirement in the next few years can even benefit from mentoring.

Many benefits can be realized through participation in a mentoring program, not only for protégés, but for the seasoned professionals that have a desire to share their experience and knowledge. An employee that is willing to serve as a mentor often finds that it is as much a learning experience for them as for their protégé. Mentors frequently pick up information about new techniques and often feel a sense of rejuvenation through sharing their experiences. Helping new employees with career advice is a great way to give back to the agency and provide a continuity of the NRCS culture and history. It validates the good things that we have accomplished over the years. NRCS management is committed to making this a successful program and a training session is planned to help mentors understand their role in the mentoring process. Ways to communicate and enhance leadership skills, as well as ways to

improve morale and motivation are some of the topics that will be discussed.

Many employees already have informal mentoring relationships. Ron Hilliard has a long term mentoring relationship. The mentor is now retired but Ron still calls him for advice and recommendations.

Making the association allows official time for meetings and phone calls. Consider becoming a mentor and sharing the things that make this a good place to work. Fill out an application and return it to the Human Resources staff soon.

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### **Women's Equality Day**

The Federal Women's Coordinating Committee (FWCC) comprised of Federal Women's Program Managers (FWPM) of North Central West Virginia sponsored *Women's Equality Day for Federal Employees* on August 26. The location was the Federal Correctional Institute, Bureau of Prisons, in Morgantown. Over 60 people attended the joint coordinated event. Speakers included FWCC Chairperson Linda Rewis, U.S. Rep. Shelley Moore Capito, Professor Sharon Wills Brescoach, and Delegate Charlene Marshall.

2005 marks the 85th Anniversary of women winning the right to vote in the United States. Women's Equality Day celebrated the 19th Amendment to the US Constitution that gave women the right to vote. It took 72 years of petitioning by the suffragettes—lead by Lucretia Mott, Susan B. Anthony, and Elizabeth Caddy Stanton before the amendment was passed in 1920.

Shelley Moore Capito described some of the advantages of being a women in politics:

- Women can express their views and sentiments from the heart.
- Women can identify with caring for elderly parents and children.
- Women can stand out by wearing bright colored clothes, instead of neutral colored suits (added humorously).
- Women are harder to acceptably attack.

Delegate Charlene Marshall encouraged women to run for political office in spite of

obstacles. She described hardships during her childhood and overcoming opposition to her running for office. She was the first African-American women to be elected mayor in WV, and second to be elected to the House of Delegates.



Congresswomen Shelley Moore Capito (right) accepts a gift basket from FWCC chairperson Linda J. Rewis (left). Capito encouraged women to become involved in politics



Professor Sharon Wills Brescoach talked about suffrage and women in politics in West Virginia



Delegate Charlene Marshall (right) describes her political career to Barbara Broxterman, NRCS FWPM (left).

FWCC represents over 11 different federal agencies (i.e. NASA, FSA, FBI, FS, etc.) FWCC puts on programs throughout the year to inspire women to take the initiative to advance their careers. NRCS's representative is Barbara Broxterman. WV NRCS supported this event and encouraged attendance by all its employees.

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## Bits and Pieces

### WVU Soils Team Qualifies for Nationals

Adam Boner, NRCS student trainee at the Oak Hill office, is a member of the West Virginia University Soils Team. The team qualified to compete in the National Collegiate Soils Contest at Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo, CA, March 19-24, 2006. Read more at [http://www.nis.wvu.edu/2005\\_releases/soils\\_team.htm](http://www.nis.wvu.edu/2005_releases/soils_team.htm)

### CFC Goal Exceeded



Fall is Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) time. The CFC is the world's largest and most successful annual workplace giving campaign. Pledges made by federal employees during the campaign season support eligible non-profit organizations that provide service benefits throughout the world. This year's goal of \$3555 for Mon/Preston Counties NRCS employees was exceeded by \$1244 thanks to the addition of the Morgantown Service Center and National Geospatial Development Center employees generous donations.

West Virginia rates in the top ten of the most generous states according to the Catalogue of Philanthropy's Generosity Index based on average adjusted gross incomes and the value of itemized charitable donations reported to the IRS on 2003 tax returns.

### Dirt Cake Recipe

- 1 8 1/2" plastic flower pot
- plastic flowers
- 1 garden trowel
- gummy worms

- 1 package crushed Oreo cookies
- 8 oz. cream cheese
- 1 cup powdered sugar
- 8 oz. Cool Whip
- 1 large box of chocolate pudding
- 1 box chocolate cake mix (baked, cooled, and crumbled up)

**Layer 1:** Spread one package of crushed Oreo cookies in the bottom of the pot, saving some to spread on top at the end.

**Layer 2:** Combine cream cheese, powdered sugar, and Cool Whip. Mix and spread over layer 1. "Plant" plastic flowers as you add layers.

**Layer 3:** Mix chocolate pudding with a little less milk than the box requires so the pudding will be thicker. Spread over layer 2.

**Layer 4:** Bake the chocolate cake mix and allow the cake to cool. Once cooled, crumble over layer 3. Add gummy worms here and on top.

**Top Layer:** Spread crushed Oreos over layer 4.

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### Human Capital Survey

For two weeks in December, an all-employee "Human Capital" survey will be available on this web site. The survey results will be used by leadership in forming the NRCS Human Capital Strategic Plan. This will impact you, your career and the workforce of the future, so be sure to make your voice heard by completing the survey!

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## Useful Links

### FSAFEDS Open Season for 2006 is November 14 - December 12, 2005

A Flexible Spending Account (FSA) offers tax savings by allowing you to pay for out-of-pocket expenses with pre-tax money. Without an FSA, you would still pay for these expenses, but you would do so using money remaining in your paycheck after federal (and often state and locality) taxes are deducted.

A Health Care Reimbursement Flexible Spending Account (HCFSA) allows you to be reimbursed for health care expenses that are not covered by insurance, such as co-payments for doctor visits, and prescription drugs.

A Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account (DCFSA) allows you to be reimbursed for dependent care expenses, such as daycare, that are necessary to allow you and your spouse (if married) to work, look for work, or attend school full-time.

Benefits that FSAFEDS has to offer:

- Dependent care account to pay for daycare and/or elder care expenses for your dependents.
- Health care account to pay for eligible medical expenses including over-the-counter medicines, physician and prescription co-payments, and much more.
- A higher maximum annual election for the health care account for 2006 — \$5,000.
- 2 ½ more months to use your balance — more time to incur expenses, so less chance of forfeiting funds.
- The May 31 filing deadline — more time to get your receipts together and send in claims.

Paperless Reimbursement eliminates the need for you to manually prepare a claim to

submit many of your out-of-pocket health care costs to FSAFEDS. With Paperless Reimbursement, FSAFEDS can save you money and valuable time as well!

Visit [www.FSAFEDS.com](http://www.FSAFEDS.com) (<https://www.fsafeds.com/fsafeds/index.asp>) to learn more about the FSAFEDS Program.

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## The National Plant Materials Program

The National Plant Materials Program has revamped their website. Check it out at <http://plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov/>

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## Guide Sheet to the WV Employee Page

Submitted by Diana Doerr

The WV NRCS Employees Page has a new look. You need to be on the WV Home Page (<http://www.wv.nrcs.usda.gov>) to complete the following steps:



1. Click on West Virginia NRCS Employees (see circled area)

(Click on images to enlarge)

This will take you to West Virginia NRCS Intranet Page



2. Click on West Virginia Employees Information Page (circled)  
You can also, enter my.NRCS from this page



This will take you to the West Virginia Employees Information Page for Bulletins, WV Forms, National Links to assist you in locating SF, AD and etc. forms, General Manual and WV Supplements, Staff Meeting Minutes etc.



In the future we will be adding a link to all Manuals, Handbooks and etc with the same set up as the General Manual. This will allow you to open the Manual you need and WV supplement without going to the National NRCS Directives Site.

If you have any suggestions to this page please send to [Diana.Doerr@wv.usda.gov](mailto:Diana.Doerr@wv.usda.gov)

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## Meet...



### Joseph Seybert returns to the engineering staff at the state office

Joseph Seybert was raised in a large family in western Pennsylvania in the rural community of East Brady on the Allegheny River, about an hour's drive north of Pittsburgh. Like all his brothers, Joseph began work at a young age at the family-owned service station and automotive repair shop. Activities of his youth included the high school band and bicycle road touring.

Joseph graduated from the Pennsylvania State University with a Bachelors of Science in Civil Engineering in 1982, earning Chi Epsilon and Tau Beta Pi honors. West Virginia's booming oil and gas economy of the early 1980's first brought him to the area as an engineer-intern with a firm in Lewis County. As this industry declined, Joseph changed fields to consulting engineering with John C. Giese Engineers of Clarksburg, WV.

In 1988, he began his federal career with the SCS at the Philippi Area Office. Joseph's work at this office was focused on mine reclamation, animal waste storage facilities, and construction support of the Upper Buffalo Creek Watershed projects. Major design accomplishments at this time include the Russell Linger animal waste storage pond in Randolph County and the Ridenour Mine Reclamation Project, Monongalia County. Joseph transferred to the Design Unit in 1991 in Morgantown, WV; providing engineering support to the Mill Creek Site 10 and North & South Mill Creek Site 7 projects. He was the project leader for the design of Elk Two Mile Site 14 and several dam breach routings including the North Fork Hughes River Dam. He returned to

Philippi in 1995 and continued with designs of mine reclamations, animal waste storage systems, and wetland restorations. Joseph designed the acclaimed Upper Pleasant Creek Wetlands located in the Pleasant Creek Wildlife Management Area on Tygart Lake. Now, after ten additional years at Philippi, he rejoined the State Conservation Engineer's staff at Morgantown, WV on October 30th of this year.

Joseph is the proud father of three sons and three daughters and is delighted with his new grand-daughter, Abigail. He resides in Bridgeport, WV and is an active member of Trinity Assembly of God Church in Fairmont, WV. He participates in the Shinnston Community Band, continues to enjoy bicycle touring, and is an antique automobile enthusiast. Joseph regularly enjoys the fair weather in his '66 Dodge Charger.



**Mary Spardy is the new accounting technician for the State Office**

Mary Spardy is continuing in federal service by joining NRCS. Past work history includes her first federal job with the Federal Bureau of Investigation in Washington DC in 1966, followed by employment with the Dept of the Navy, Patuxent River, MD. She moved to Pittsburgh, PA in 1970, after her husband was discharged from the Navy, and began her career in the private sector. One employer in private industry was Dravo Corporation where she worked for 14 years. Entering federal service again in 1989, Mary worked at the VA Hospital in Oakland, PA. In November 1994, she was employed by the Pittsburgh District Corps of Engineers as a Management Support Assistant for the Mon River Locks and Dams Project Office, Masontown, PA. After the Corp reorganized in November 2004, she was reassigned to the Construction Office in Monessen, PA as a Construction Clerk before applying for her current position at NRCS.

Mary earned a 2-year BS degree in Business Administration from Penn State Fayette Campus in 2002.

Born and raised in Schuylkill County, PA, Mary and her husband Jim of 38 years reside

in Morgantown, WV. Their daughter Kara, son-in-law Matthew, and grandson Liam Sweeney – 2-1/2 (born on Mary's birthday) live on Long Island.

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**Crystle Buchanan is the new Administrative Office Assistant in the Parkersburg West Area Office**

Crystle Buchanan is the new Administrative Office Assistant in the Parkersburg west area office, and works under Greg Kist, the west area ASTC-FO. She is responsible for timekeeping, travel and supplies for the west area field offices and employees, and is fast learning of the many other duties of the job. She is a 1976 graduate of the Art Institute of Pittsburgh, and she has spent many years in the advertising field working as a graphic designer, both for advertising agencies, and as a freelance artist. She is currently working on a bachelor's degree at the Parkersburg extension of West Virginia University, with an emphasis in drafting courses.

She found out about her position with NRCS through interim work with AmeriCorps at WVU Extension Service. She and her husband and two sons (13 and 17) live in Parkersburg where she has served as a volunteer for the Wood County 4-H program for 10 years and has been active in her children's school and church youth activities. They have a 40-acre farm, where they house and feed 2 horses, 2 dogs, 2 cats, 2 kids, and 2 parents.



**Nicole Viars is the new District Conservationist for the McMechen Field Office**

Nicole Viars can call West Virginia "home" once again, after living in Indiana and Michigan for the past 13 years. She is the new District Conservationist in the McMechen field office. Nicole is originally from Hundred, WV (yes, that is the name of the town), and is a 1992 graduate of West Virginia University with a degree in Resource Management. Her career with the agency started in Morgantown, WV, at the field

office and at the state office, where she worked during college. After graduating from WVU, she moved to Indiana as a soil conservationist after her husband, Vincent, was hired as an engineer for Ford. She and her family moved to Michigan in 1995, and back to Indiana in 1997, following Vincent's career. She is thankful that the agency has always been very accommodating for her while her family has followed her husband's career path. She was even able to take a couple of years off work to raise their family during this time. Now, the family is following her career, and her husband is a stay-at-home-dad until he finds employment. She is quite happy with this arrangement. What woman wouldn't like coming home to a clean home and no laundry to do at the end of every day?

Nicole and her husband have two boys, Alex, age 11, and Isaac, age 9.



**Our Own Zorro**  
**Wes Morrow, Water Resources Civil**  
**Engineer**

Wes Morrow, Water Resources Civil Engineer in Morgantown, will be fencing the Division I and Veteran's Men's Saber events in the United States Fencing Association's North American Cup in Pittsburgh, PA. Wes, who coaches and competes for the West Virginia University Fencing Club, is no stranger to high level fencing tournaments. He won the bronze medal in the Veterans International Championship in Kassel, Germany in 1996. That same year, he earned the gold medal in the US National Saber Championship in the veterans over-age 40 and 50 categories. He was the saber champion in the Mid-Atlantic States section in 1984, and has qualified for the US Olympic Team Trials six times from 1972 through 1996. Morrow has been fencing for 44 years. He started as a high school student in Long Island, New York.

The Pittsburgh North American Cup, an elite-level event featuring more than 700 of the nation's best fencers, takes place December 9-11, 2005.

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Personnel Updates

As of October 27

Name	Action	Location	Change
Spardy, Mary	Transfer	USCOE Monessen, PA	Morgantown SO GS-525-5
Allen, Michael	Reassignment Effective 10/02/2005	Romney FO GS-802-7	Petersburg FO
Ball, Jessica	Reassignment Effective 10/02/2005	Moorefield FO GS-457-9	Petersburg FO
Bush, Gary	Promotion Effective 10/16/2005	Glenville FO GS-458-5	GS-458-6
Crislip, Jason	Promotion Effective 10/02/2005	Point Pleasant FO GS-457-7	GS-457-9
Duckworth, Brandon	Promotion Effective 08/21/2005	Hamlin FO GS-458-5	GS-458-6
Fitzwater, Sarah	Promotion Effective 07/24/2005	Keyser FO GS-457-5	GS-457-7

Haid, Ken	Reassignment Effective 07/24/2005	Moorefield FO GS- 457-11	Cross Lanes FO
Hicks, Christi	Reassignment Effective 10/02/2005	Romney FO GS- 457-9	Moorefield FO
Kerns, Alan	New Hire Effective 09/18/2005	-	Petersburg FO GS- 802-6
Ketterman, Carrie	Promotion Effective 10/16/2005	Parkersburg FO GS-457-7	GS-457-9
Lewis, Rebecca	Reassignment Effective 10/02/2005	Ranson FO GS- 457-9	Romney FO
Lynch, Daniel	Reassignment Effective 10/02/2005	Petersburg FO GS- 457-11	Moorefield FO
Viars, Nicole	Promotion/Transfer Effective 09/04/2005	Connersville, IN NRCS Field Office GS-457-11	District Conservationist McMechen FO GS- 457-12
Woodson, Hayward D. "Butch"	Retirement Effective 09/03/2005	Morgantown SO GS-457-12	-